SUPERMAN • DC • NATIONAL COMICS

MAY
NO. 201

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

12¢

BATMAN

DON'T MOVE, BATMAN-- OUR ORDERS ARE SHOOT TO KILL!

WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE BATMAN

POLICE

BATMAN

SEVEN EXPERT MARKSMEN TAKING *DEAD AIM* AT A HANDCUFFED *BATMAN!* SEVEN OF *GOTHAM CITY'S* TOP VILLAINS TEAMING UP TO SAVE THE LIFE OF THEIR ARCH-FOE!
THAT'S ALL WE'RE CLUING YOU IN ON THIS YARN OF PLOT AND COUNTER-PLOT!

"BATMAN'S GANGLAND GUARDIANS!"

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SOMEWHERE IN GOTHAM CITY, IN A SECRET HIDEAWAY KNOWN ONLY TO THE OVERLORDS OF THE UNDERWORLD--SITS A LIVING ROGUES' GALLERY OF CRIMEDOM'S CLEVEREST CROOKS...

ALL RIGHT, PENGUIN--THIS MEETING YOU SUMMONED US TO BETTER BE NO GAG!

YOU INTERRUPTED MY CATNAP--

I WAS TRYING ON A NEW HAT WHEN YOUR BIRDY VOICE ASSURED ME IT WAS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH!

CLUE US IN! WHOSE LIFE? WHOSE DEATH?

BATMAN'S DEATH!

AND OURS AS WELL!

JOKER

CAT WOMAN

MAD HATTER

PENGUIN

CLUE MASTER

GETAWAY GENIUS

JOHNNY WITTS

I'VE BEEN TIPPED OFF THAT A WEST COAST SYNDICATE IS ABOUT TO INVADE GOTHAM CITY!

SO WHAT! THERE'S NO CROOK GOING CAN CATCH THE GETAWAY GENIUS IN A DEATH-TRAP!

JOHNNY WITTS WILL ALWAYS BE ONE-STEP AHEAD OF 'EM!

WAIT! HEAR ME OUT, MY FINE-FEATHERED FELONS!

THE SYNDICATE ISN'T AFRAID OF US! BUT THEY KNOW THEY'LL NEVER GET A FOOTHOLD HERE AS LONG AS BATMAN IS AROUND TO STOP THEM...

...SO THEY'VE PLANNED A SERIES OF ROBBERIES AT WHICH DEATH-TRAPS HAVE BEEN SET FOR OUR NEMESIS, BATMAN!

NOW--ASSUMING THEY DO DISPOSE OF THE CAPED CRUSADER--

THE SYNDICATE WILL HARDLY PERMIT US TO CONTINUE OPERATING HERE--CUTTING IN ON THEIR PROFITS! SO THEY'LL KNOCK US OFF TOO!

ERGO--WE MUST JOIN FORCES--TEAM UP TO SPARE BATMAN'S LIFE!

BY SAVING **BATMAN'S** LIFE, WE'LL ACTUALLY BE SAVING OUR OWN!

THIS IS NO LAUGHING MATTER!

YOU'VE GIVEN US A PURR-FECT REASON TO STEP IN!

MY HAT'S OFF TO YOU, **PENGUIN**--FOR SOUNDING THE ALERT!

NOW--AN IMPORTANT QUESTION--

WHO TIPPED YOU OFF ABOUT ALL THIS?

EGAD, MAD HATTER! I WAS AFRAID OF THAT EMBARRASSING QUESTION! TO BE BLUNT ABOUT IT--

SO THIS **IS** A GAG AT OUR EXPENSE, YOU BIRD-BRAIN!

I DON'T KNOW!

I'M A STEP AHEAD OF YOU--YOU **MASTER OF FOWL PLAY!** I'M WALKING OUT ON THIS MEETING!

NO--WAIT! I REALIZE IT'S A LOT TO ASK OF YOU--BUT ON MY HONOR AS A **BUMBERSHOOT BANDIT**--

A VOICE CAME TO ME OUT OF THIN AIR--GIVING ME THE DATES AND PLACES TO BE ROBBED BY THE SYNDICATE--AS WELL AS THE TYPE OF **DEATH-TRAPS** SET THERE FOR **BATMAN!**

DO WE **DARE** TAKE THE RISK OF IGNORING THIS WARNING?

DO ANY OF YOU FAVOR THE SYNDICATE DESTROYING OUR CHANCES OF EVER MATCHING WITS WITH **BATMAN** AGAIN?

THE **CAPED CRUSADER'S** SKIN IS MEANT FOR **MY** SHARPENED CLAWS!

SOME-DAY--SOMEWHERE--I'LL HAVE THE LAST LAUGH ON THAT **MASKED MANHUNTER!**

I'M TOSSING MY HAT INTO THE RING--TO SAVE **BATMAN!**

COUNT ME IN!

AS THE **GETAWAY GENIUS,** I INSIST ON THE RIGHT OF HELPING **BATMAN** GET AWAY FROM ONE OF THOSE DEATH-TRAPS!

PENGUIN

CATWOMAN

I'D BE HALF-WITTED NOT TO AGREE!

IT'S AGREED THEN--THAT WE ALLY OURSELVES WITH **BATMAN**?

AGREED! **BATMAN** STAYS ALIVE--SO **WE** STAY ALIVE TO MATCH WITS WITH HIM AT A LATER DAY!

AGREED! THOUGH I NEVER THOUGHT I'D LIVE TO SEE THE DAY!

ONE CAUTIONING NOTE! WE MUST **NEVER** LET **BATMAN SEE** US!

IT MIGHT DESTROY HIS FAITH IN HUMAN NATURE IF HE SAW ANY OF HIS ARCH-FOES ACTUALLY **SAVING** HIS LIFE!

I'LL TAKE THE FIRST ROBBERY AND DEATH-TRAP--TO MAKE SURE IT OCCURS AS I'VE BEEN INFORMED!

THEN, AFTER IT'S BEEN CONFIRMED, I'LL CONTACT THE REST OF YOU AND GIVE YOU YOUR ASSIGNMENTS!

HEAVENLY HATS! THIS IS THE WAY I IMAGINE THE **JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA** GOES INTO ACTION!

THE FOLLOWING EVENING, AS A GRIMLY GARBED CREATURE OF THE NIGHT PROWLS THE LONELY LABYRINTH THAT IS **GOTHAM CITY** AFTER DARK...

HELLO! THE **BAT-TECTOR** IS KICKING UP!

THE HUNCH I HAD TO TAKE THIS ROUTE TONIGHT--IS ABOUT TO PAY OFF!

INSIDE THE **GOTHAM CITY MUSEUM** WORKSHOP--WHERE RARE ART TREASURES ARE CLEANED AND PROCESSED FOR DISPLAY IN THE MUSEUM ...

HERE COMES **BATMAN**--JUST AS WE COUNTED ON!

HE DOESN'T KNOW IT--BUT THAT DOORWAY IS BOOBY-TRAPPED WITH ENOUGH DYNAMITE TO BLAST HIM TO **BAT-BITS** ALL OVER THE JOINT!

SOON AS HE CROSSES THE DOORWAY, HE'LL BREAK AN ELECTRIC EYE BEAM AND--

BA-A-BLAAM!!

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

THEN -- THROUGH THE DUST AND DEBRIS OF A DYNAMITE-DISINTEGRATED DOORWAY HURTLES THE MIGHTILY MUSCLED FORM OF THE CAPED CRUSADER...

HE AIN'T HUMAN!

NOBODY-BUT NOBODY--COULD HAVE LIVED THROUGH THAT!

I DON'T KNOW HOW IT HAPPENED-- BUT THE DOORWAY BLEW UP --

--JUST BEFORE I GOT TO IT!

THEIR TIMING WAS OFF--BUT MINE ISN'T!

NEVER THOUGHT I'D HAVE TO RELY ON MY GUN--

:ULP!: KICKED IT OUTA MY HAND!

PIVOTING AROUND, THE MASKED MANHUNTER SEES...

THIS PLACE IS LIKE AN ARMORY--LOADED WITH ALL SORTS OF WEAPONS!

THAT MEDIEVAL BATTLE-MACE--!

WHILE OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM WORKSHOP, ON A NEARBY ROOFTOP...

HOW DROLL! A DART FROM MY UMBRELLA ACTIVATED THE ELECTRIC EYE BEAM THAT WOULD HAVE BLASTED BATMAN!

IT PROVES MY MYSTERIOUS STOOL PIGEON SPOKE THE TRUTH!

NOW THAT I'VE GIVEN BATMAN A REPRIEVE, I'M CONFIDENT HE'LL CARRY ON IN HIS CUSTOMARY WINNING WAY!

THE THUD-AND-CRACK OF FLYING FISTS AND WHIRLING WEAPONS ECHO FROM THE WORKSHOP WALLS AS--

LUCK'S WITH ME TONIGHT ALL RIGHT!

KNOCKED BACK BY THAT FOLLOW-UP MACE-BLOW--JUST ENOUGH TO AVOID THAT SNEAK ATTACK FROM BEHIND!

CRUNCH!

I DON'T INTEND TO FENCE AROUND WITH YOU--

I'M PARRYING YOUR BATTLE-MACE WITH AN ARMLOCK-AND-SHOULDER FLIP!

MASSIVELY MUSCLED HANDS GRIP AND TIGHTEN ON THE BAR OF A NEO-SURREALIST STATUE, AS...

THREE MORE OF 'EM -- WITH GUNS!...

I'M A LITTLE CROWDED IN THESE QUARTERS, SO--

I'LL CLEAR A LITTLE FIGHTING ROOM FOR MYSELF!

UNCOILING LIKE A SNAPPING SPRING, THE GOTHAM GANGBUSTER'S FISTS ARE HUMAN HAMMERS OF FLESH AND BONE AS THEY BEAT ON THEIR TARGETS! ...

ZONNK K!

TOO BAD ROBIN'S OFF WITH THE TEEN TITANS ON A CASE...

HE WOULD HAVE ENJOYED THIS SCRAP--

RUNNING HIS WAY THROUGH ALL KINDS OF PUNCHES!

BOP!

IN THE GOTHAM THIEVES' DEN, NEXT DAY...

WELL, MY BURGLARIZING BIRDS OF ILL OMEN, NOW THAT YOU'VE SEEN TODAYS NEWSPAPERS, DO YOU BELIEVE --

WE BELIEVE! THIS MEANS I'M NEXT ON OUR "SAVE BATMAN" OPERATION!

WHY THE DEERSTALKER HAT, MAD HATTER?

SINCE I'M TEMPORARILY ON THE SIDE OF LAW-AND-ORDER-- MY SHERLOCK HOLMES HEADGEAR IS MOST APPROPRIATE TO THE OCCASION!

BUT I'LL BE CHANGING IT FOR THIS MINER'S HEADPIECE WITH ITS SPECIAL HEADLAMP FIXTURE WHEN I "TAKE THE FIELD"!

WHEN AND WHERE IS THE SYNDICATE SCHEDULED TO STRIKE NEXT?

TONIGHT-- AT THE OPEN AIR JEWELRY DISPLAY PUT ON BY THE GOTHAM CITY GEM SALON!

THAT BALMY EVENING, AS THE BATMOBILE STALKS THE STREETS OF GOTHAM CITY...

WHAT A TIME FOR THE HOT-LINE TO SOUND OFF!

JUST WHEN I'VE MADE UP MY MIND TO CHECK OUT THE OPEN AIR JEWELRY DISPLAY...

BEEP! BEEP!

BATMAN, WE JUST RECEIVED WORD THAT SOME CROOKS ARE GOING TO ROB THE GEM SALON DISPLAY IN GOTHAM SQUARE PARK!

I'M WAY AHEAD OF YOU, COMMISSIONER! I WAS ON MY WAY THERE WHEN YOU CALLED!

IN GOTHAM SQUARE PARK, SOME MINUTES LATER...

THAT BATMAN SURE IS A TOUGH CUSTOMER! HE NOT ONLY AVOIDED THAT DOORWAY DEATH-TRAP-- BUT ROUNDED UP THE GANG THERE!

THAT'S WHY THOSE FOLLOW-UP BOOBY-TRAPS WERE PREPARED FOR HIM!

HEY-- LOOK AT THAT SHADOW!

BAT-SHADOW MEANS BATMAN!...

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL... HE'S HERE!

HERE'S WHERE THOSE GUN-HAPPY CROOKS HAVE A BALL--

WELL, DON'T JUST STAND HERE LIKE DUMMIES..

LET'S SET HIM UP FOR THE KILL!

--WITH THIS TEAR-GAS BALL!

GETTING BLEARY-EYED!

VOOOM!!

OUT OF THE WISPS SWINGS THE COWLED CRUSADER LIKE AN AVENGING SPIRIT...

FIRE AWAY-- WHEREVER HE IS!

NO! WE MIGHT SHOOT OURSELVES!

I'LL USE THAT BRANCH-- AS AN EXTRA ARM!...

CONTINUED ON 4TH PAGE FOLLOWING.

Dear Editor:

So many times have I read in letter columns comments to the effect that, "Bob Kane's really outdone himself in this story"; and each time I reread the story and laugh, for after Infantino and Greene, Kane's figures look completely lifeless. Yet after *Batman* 197 I am forced to forget my prejudices and admit that Bob Kane really did outdo himself in "Catwoman Sets Her Claws for Batman!" I don't know how, but in some way Kane has been able to replace his stiff, lifeless, unemotional figures with a *Batman* and *Robin* (and *Batgirl* and *Catwoman*) that actually *live*!

Maybe it was the story, and a good one indeed, that inspired Mr. Kane so. John Broome (or maybe Gardner Fox) has written a story with nary a wasted panel. The major thesis, that *Catwoman* wants to marry our *Batman*-type bachelor, was not the best; but the secondary theme of *Catwoman* wanting to utterly ruin *Batgirl* was a most successful one. And when the author shows his readers that *Catwoman* just won't reform, well, since I already suspected that in no small degree, I was quite satisfied.

As for the two females that highlighted the story—I can't really appreciate this version of what used to be the best villainess in comics. I can't believe that *Catwoman* really loves *Batman*. If she did, she would give up her larcency with no strings attached. And if she did marry *Batman*, would she really be content to play the role of housewife? I think not.

Batgirl was played to her potential. Her character has been established firmly enough, so that when she walked away from *Batman*, having been humiliated by *Catwoman*, I knew she wouldn't complain or make excuses.

You know, after this story I might actually welcome encounters between the *Beautiful Batlady* and *Poison Ivy*.

—*David Lewin, Lomita, Cal.*

(It was a *Fox* (*Gardner* variety) that livened up the *Woman* (*Cat* Variety) in the story. Your yearning for a confrontation with *Poison Ivy* evoked a similar feeling in the next correspondent.—Editor)

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Dear Editor:

Batman 197 was the issue that I've long been waiting for! After seeing how the "new look" changed the *Riddler, Penguin* and *Joker*, I am glad at the version of *Catwoman* you gave us. I am happy to say that *Catwoman*, the *Countess of Crime*, is still as cunning, sinister and exciting as ever. However, there's just one thing about her that's bothering me—which I will go into later.

When *Batgirl* first began to get recognition, popularity, and fame in the comics, I could hardly wait till the *Dominoed Daredoll* clashed forces with the *Feline of Felony*. Now you've made that dream a reality.

As a loyal *Batman* fan, I must say that "Catwoman Sets Her Claws for Batman" was an historical and important issue, because it marked the return of *Catwoman*; and the overall picture of two women fighting for possession of that *Fearless Fighter of Fiendish Felons—Batman!*—was quite something!

In the future, I would like to see *Catwoman* and *Batgirl* meet that *Voracious Villainess, Poison Ivy*. Since *Poison Ivy* is also in love with *Batman*, it would be interesting to see what the *Princess of Plunder* would do in an intriguing situation like this.

Now as to what's been bothering me about *Catwoman's* "new look". Of late, I've noticed that some of your costumed villains wear green. The *Joker* has green hair, a green shirt, and once wore green gloves. The *Riddler* wears big, black question marks, a purple mask and gloves, and yet green is the dominant color. Except for her hair, *Poison Ivy* sported a head-to-toe green costume. If you think that these aren't good enough reasons, then I'll give you the clincher—my high school math teacher's name is—can you guess?-Mr. *Green*!

Now, to my dismay, *Catwoman's* new uniform has turned green too! Did you ever see a green cat? No, of course not! But you have seen a black cat, right? And black cats supposedly are *bad luck*, right? *Catwoman* is just what she is—*rotten, bad luck*! So please revise *Catwoman's* costume to overall black (perhaps with purple gloves, boots, belt, mask, and "ears"). She'll look much better, more sinister and mysterious, and *literally be bad luck*.

—*Michael Lederman, Brooklyn, N.Y.*

(Oh, boy, are we lucky! If you had known that the inker of this *Catwoman* story was Sid *Greene*—!—*Editor*)

• • • • • •

Dear Editor:

Hot dog! Wow! And all that kind of stuff. Although I realize it's in fashion to present one's comments as reservedly and intelligently as one can, I just can't hold myself back. "Catwoman Sets Her Claws for Batman" was *the* best story of the year. You really ended up on a good note and there are so many reasons for this I won't even begin the cover them all.

The story itself was very good in plot and action. The return of *Catwoman* will bring controversy, I'm sure, but not from me. I'm reasonable sure, also, that other readers will tell you what points of the story made it a great one, so I will go to another subject and let them elaborate on that facet of this masterpiece.

The interior artwork was stunning. Please keep Sid Greene as the inker. Bob Kane's pencils really turn to gold with green(e) ink. As for the cover. I'm still trying to figure out who the artists were. At first glance I would venture a guess at it being Infantino and Giella, but seeing how the latter hasn't been inking any covers lately, I would say the inker was George Roussos.

—*Dave Truesdale, So. St. Paul, Minn.*

(You were right in identifying Infantino as the cover-penciller, but credit goes to Mike Esposito for the inking. It'll take a good eye to spot this issue's cover artist!-*Editor*)

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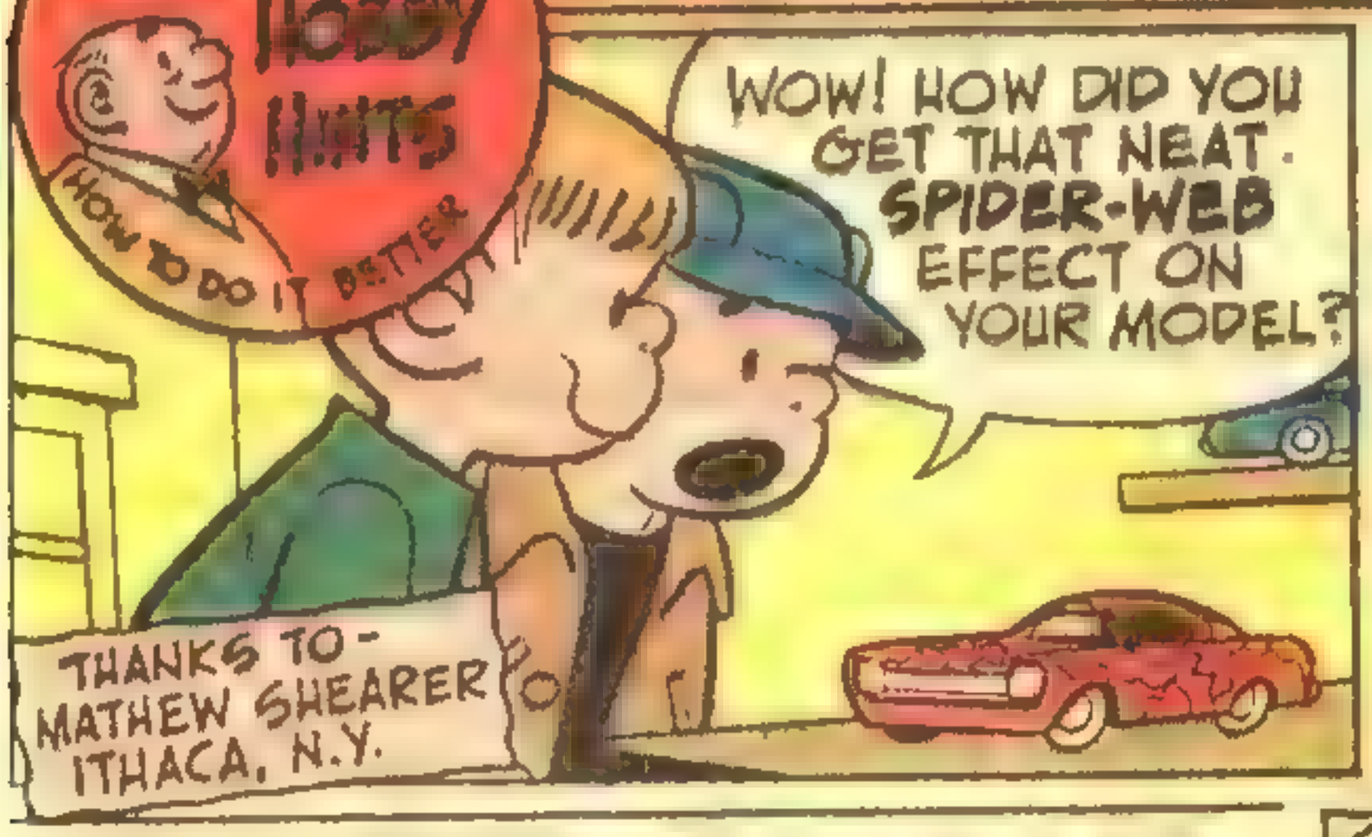
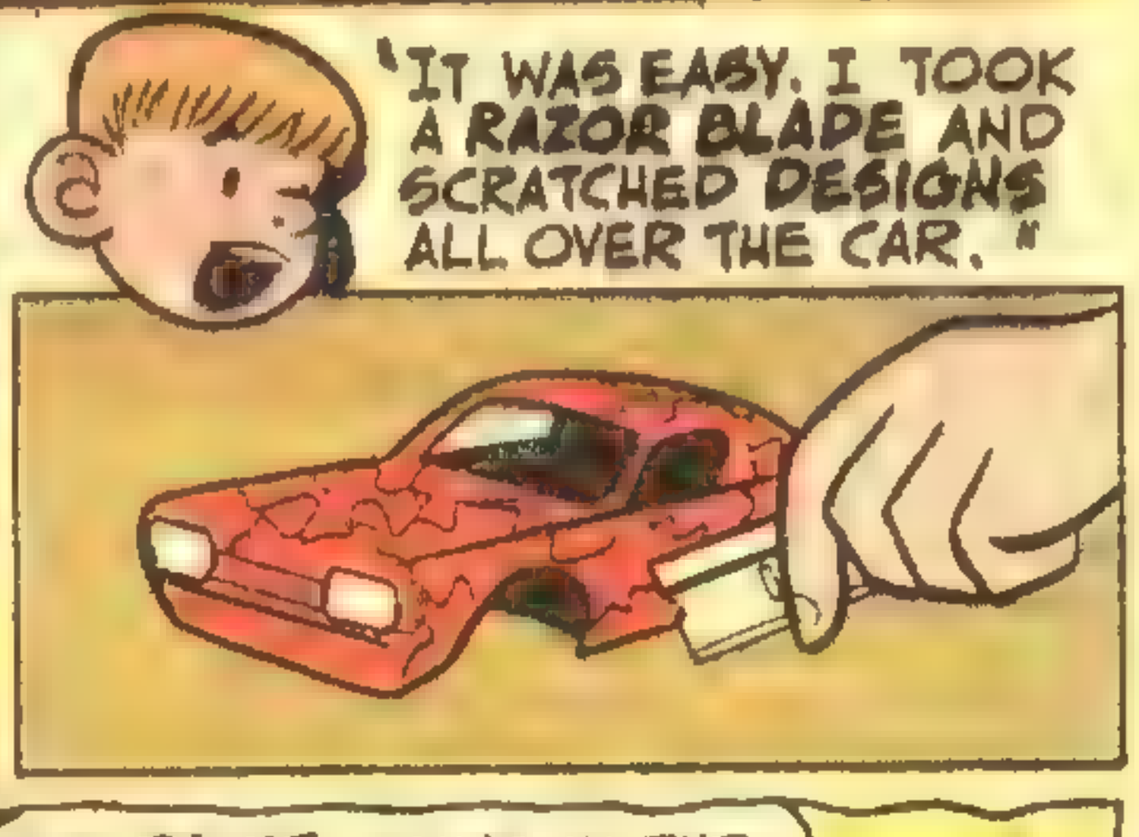
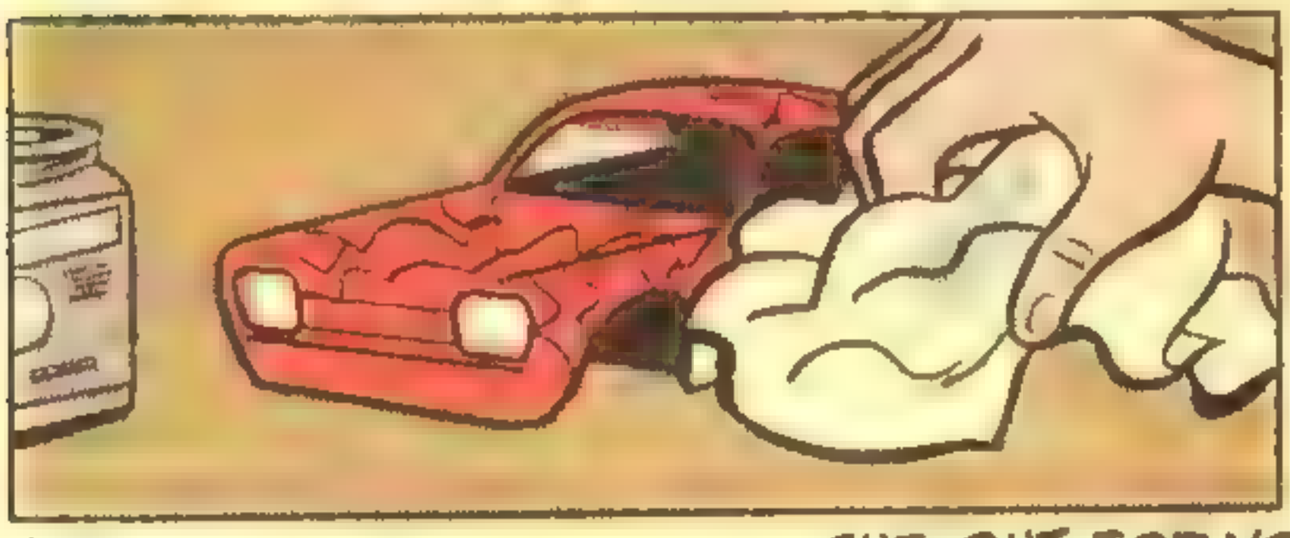

CAP'S HOBBY HINTS
HOW TO DO IT BETTER
WOW! HOW DID YOU GET THAT NEAT SPIDER-WEB EFFECT ON YOUR MODEL?
THANKS TO- MATHEW SHEARER ITHACA, N.Y.





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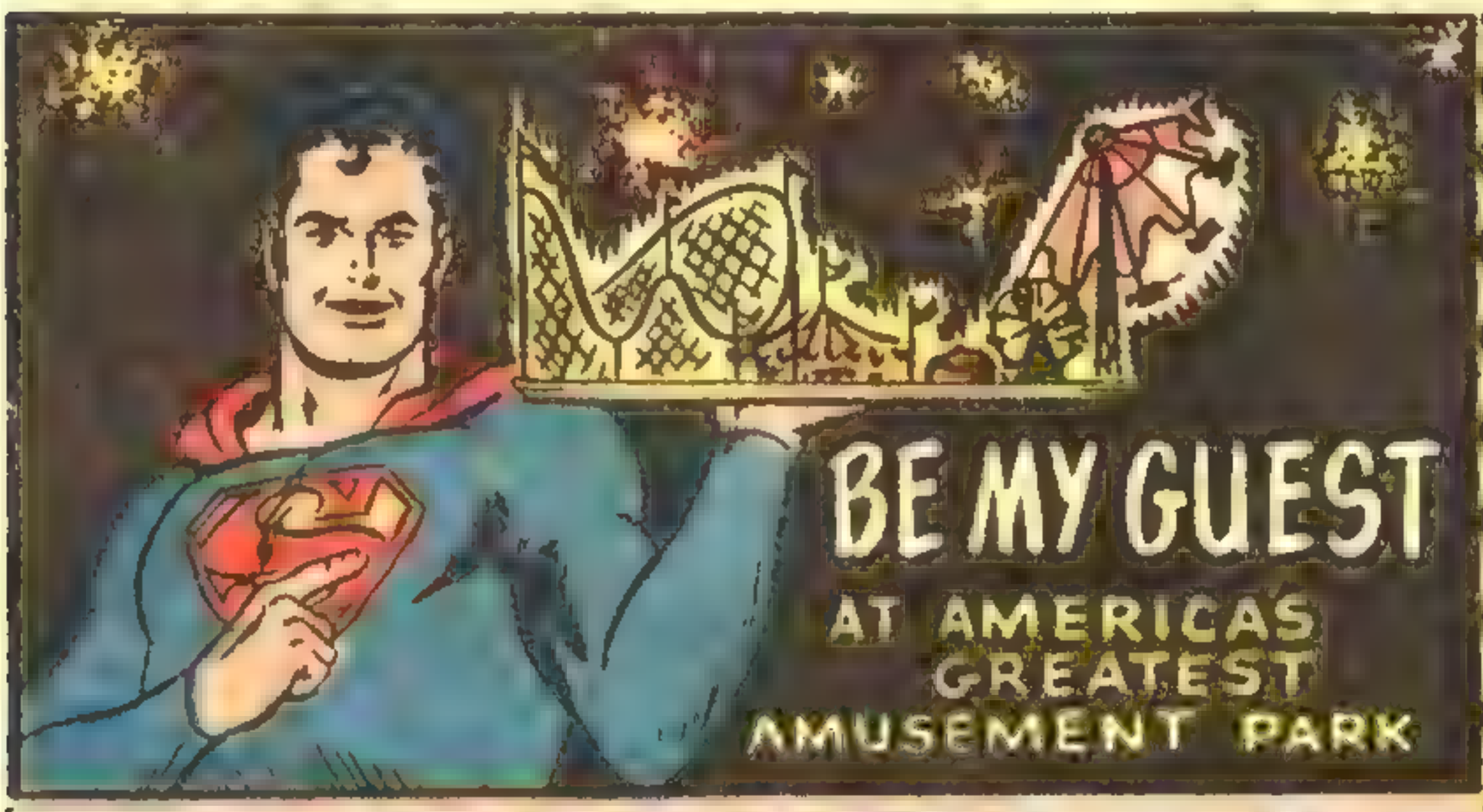

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LOOK FOR THIS COUPON IN ALL MAY THROUGH OCTOBER ISSUES

ZINGO

MY FALLING WEIGHT SET UP A TREE-LIMB CHAIN REACTION!

THUMP

LEAPING TO THE GROUND, THE *MASKED MANHUNTER* GRABS HIMSELF A "WEAPON" WITH A QUICK TWIST OF THE WRIST...

HERE'S WHERE I SET THE TABLE--FOR A SURPRISE PARTY!

HEY! WHO'S GOT US *COVERED*?

SOON AS A HEAD POPS UP--

I SWAT IT DOWN AGAIN!

POOR FELLOWS--THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HIT THEM!

SWONNK!

AS THE LAST HOODLUM CRUMPLES UNDERNEATH THE CLOTH...

THERE'LL BE NO MORE INTERFERENCE AS I GATHER UP THE SCATTERED LOOT--

ONE BY ONE THE JEWELS ARE REPLACED ON THE DISPLAY TABLE, UNTIL...

ALL THAT'S LEFT IS THAT BIG PEARL!

WITHOUT THOUGHT OF DANGER, THE *GOTHAM CITY GUARDIAN* WALKS FORWARD, HIS FOOT-FALLS ECHOING WITH HOLLOW THUDS...

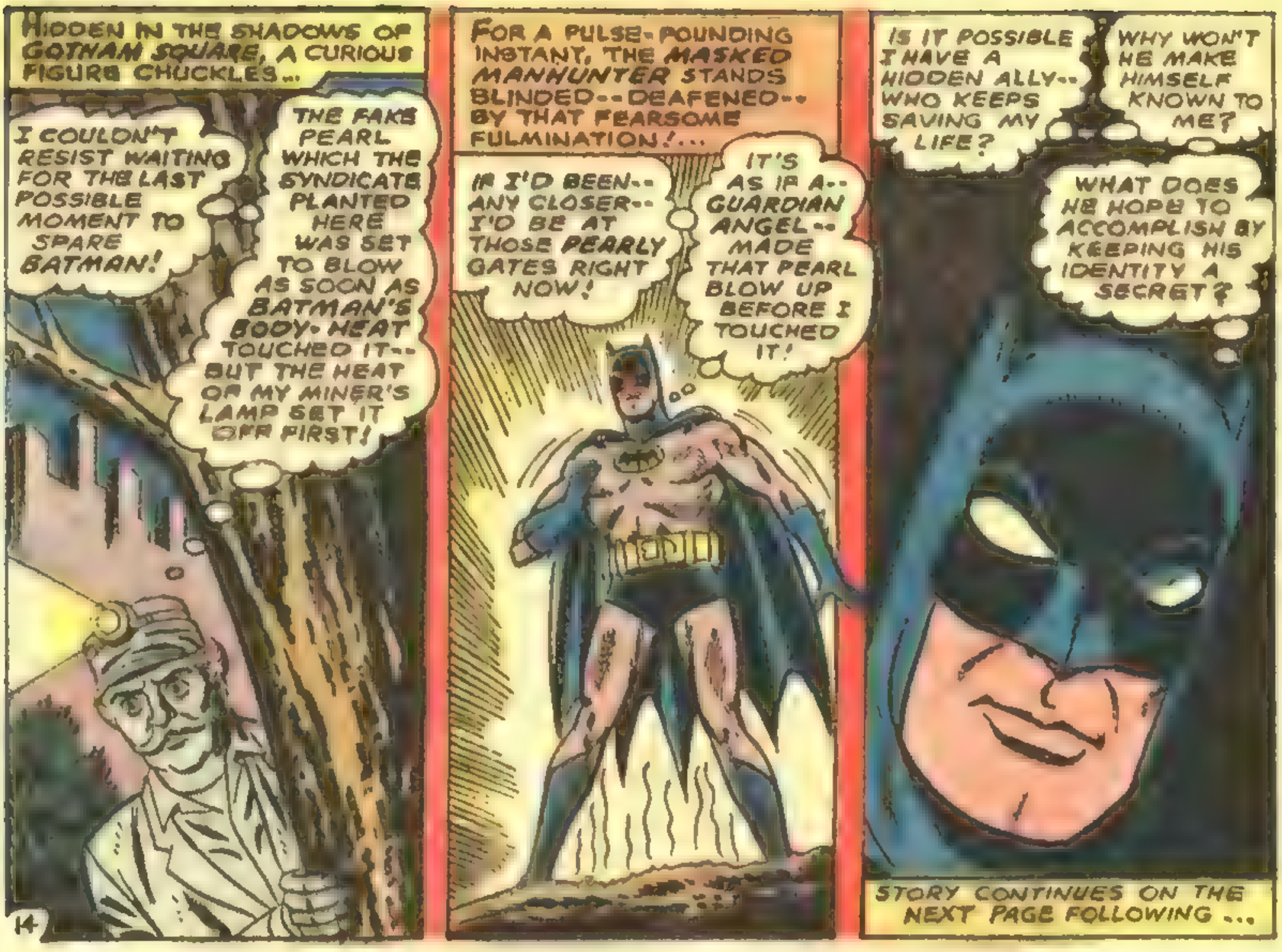
THE DISGUISED DOOM-GEM LURES HIM AS A MAGNET ATTRACTS IRON FILINGS...

A HUSH SEEMINGLY BLANKETS THE CITY AS DEATH HOLDS ITS BREATH--WAITING FOR THE MAN WHO HAS SO LONG AVOIDED ITS CLUTCHES...

HIS HAND BEGINS ITS DESCENT AS DEATH CROUCHES TO POUNCE...

WHEN SUDDENLY THE AIR IS TORN APART BY A DEAFENING ERUPTION...

KA-KLAAAAM!!


HIDDEN IN THE SHADOWS OF GOTHAM SQUARE, A CURIOUS FIGURE CHUCKLES...
I COULDN'T RESIST WAITING FOR THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT TO SPARE BATMAN!
THE FAKE PEARL WHICH THE SYNDICATE PLANTED HERE WAS SET TO BLOW AS SOON AS BATMAN'S BODY-HEAT TOUCHED IT-- BUT THE HEAT OF MY MINER'S LAMP SET IT OFF FIRST!
FOR A PULSE-POUNDING INSTANT, THE MASKED MANHUNTER STANDS BLINDED--DEAFENED-- BY THAT FEARSOME FULMINATION!...
IF I'D BEEN-- ANY CLOSER-- I'D BE AT THOSE PEARLY GATES RIGHT NOW!
IT'S AS IF A-- GUARDIAN ANGEL-- MADE THAT PEARL BLOW UP BEFORE I TOUCHED IT!
IS IT POSSIBLE I HAVE A HIDDEN ALLY-- WHO KEEPS SAVING MY LIFE?
WHY WON'T HE MAKE HIMSELF KNOWN TO ME?
WHAT DOES HE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH BY KEEPING HIS IDENTITY A SECRET?
STORY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE FOLLOWING ...
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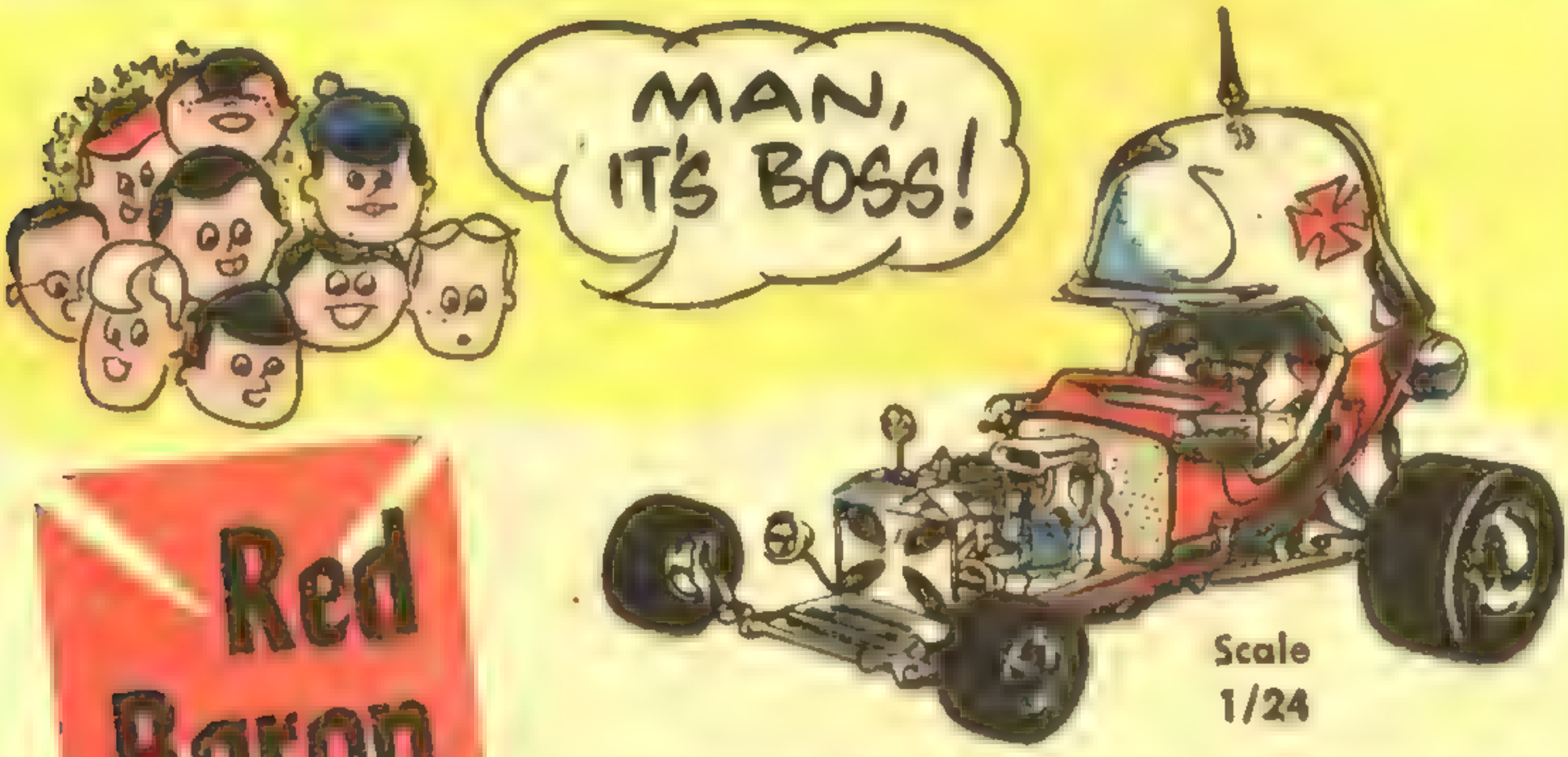

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Scale 1/24

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Made exclusively by Monogram Models, Inc., Morton Grove, Ill.

ONCE AGAIN *BATMAN'S GANGLAND GUARDIANS* MEET TO DISCUSS THE PROGRESS OF THEIR CAMPAIGN ...

I'M HAVING AS GOOD A TIME AS A KITTEN WITH A BALL OF TWINE!

WHO GETS TO PLAY "*SAVE BATMAN*" NEXT, *PENGUIN*?

YOU DO, *CLUEMASTER*--THIS VERY NIGHT AT THE *MEADOWLAND AMUSEMENT PARK*!

CATWOMAN

PENGUIN

CLUEMASTER

THAT EVENING, IN THE *BATCAVE* ...

IT'S BEEN SOME TIME SINCE I WENT ON *BAT-COPTER* PATROL...

I'VE GOT A SNEAKING SUSPICION IT'LL COME IN HANDY TONIGHT...

UP FROM THE HIDDEN HANGAR WHICH FORMS PART OF THE *BATCAVE* RISES THE *BAT-COPTER*...

MY FIRST IDEA WAS TO PATROL THE WATERFRONT--

BUT THE THOUGHT'S SUDDENLY POPPED INTO MY HEAD TO TAKE IN THE *MEADOWLAND AMUSEMENT PARK!*

AND THIS TIME, I BETTER BE ON SPECIAL GUARD FOR ANY MORE OF THOSE SURPRISE DEATH-TRAPS!

WHEN THE *MASKED HUNTER* APPROACHES THE BRIGHTLY-LIT AMUSEMENT AREA ...

GUNSHOTS BEING FIRED UP AT THAT WHIRLYBIRD! LOOKS LIKE CROOKS MAKING A GETAWAY BY AIR!

I'LL FLY INTO THAT CLOUD AHEAD--STRIKE AT THEM FROM UNDERCOVER!

ZING!

ZING!

UNKNOWN TO THE *COWLED CRUSADER*, EAGER VOICES ARE AWAITING THAT "CLOUDY" ATTACK...

BATMAN OUGHTA BE HITTIN' THAT CLOUD ANY SEC NOW--

HOLD TIGHT! THE IMPACT MIGHT JAR US--!

THEN-- TO THE AMAZEMENT OF THE *CAPED CRIME-FIGHTER* ...

HUH? THE CLOUD'S SWERVING AWAY-- DROPPING TO THE GROUND!?

IT-- IT'S NOT... *NATURAL!*

AND WHEN THE COTTONY MASS ... TOUCHES THE MEADOWGRASS ...

IF I'D MOVED INTO THAT CLOUD-- I WOULD HAVE BEEN CAUGHT IN THAT EXPLOSION!

SAVED AGAIN FROM ANOTHER DEATH-TRAP! BUT WAS IT BY *LUCK*-- OR *DESIGN*?

BA-ROOOM

HIDDEN IN A NEARBY TREE-- THE *CLUE-MASTER*...

I USED A MAGNETIC DEVICE TO PULL THAT DOOM-CLOUD AWAY FROM *BATMAN*--

--AND A REMOTE-CONTROL GADGET TO DETONATE IT BEFORE *BATMAN* CONTACTED IT!

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

K

DIRECT CURRENTS

Well, it's time for more news about the newest from the DC front. Coming up . . . the introduction of a new kind of hero—ANTHRO; Neal Adams' first art job on the Superman-Batman team; Steve Ditko's CREEPER in his own mag; and an 80 PAGE GIANT devoted to the Legion of Super-Heroes! P.S. Don't forget two new features on the agenda for the near future: ANGEL AND THE APE and THE HAWK AND THE DOVE!

★★★★★★★★★★★

In the midst of the toughest fighting he has ever experienced in EASY COMPANY, SGT. ROCK finds himself faced with an incredible miracle, in his latest battle bonanza--"BLOOD IN THE DESERT!" This is one of the most startling war adventures in ROCK'S career—and it's in the May OUR ARMY AT WAR, No. 193, on sale March 5.

WONDER WOMAN faces one of the most fearsome threats of all time, and it seems as if the AMAZING AMAZON may have come to the end of her colorful crime-fighting career, when she is suddenly and shockingly confronted by the—"THREAT OF THE TRIPLE STARS!" This super-sensation is featured in the June issue, No. 176, on sale March 7!

Headed for a well-deserved rest, the RANGERS are detoured when a wagon train of settlers is ambushed by a band of rampaging redskins! There's always one good scrap left in the RANGERS, but the savage Indians and a double-crossing wagon master threaten them with death, in the June TOMAHAWK, No. 116, on sale March 7!

When some spies use the LITTLE BO PEEP SCHOOL FOR GIRLS as a hideout, who should be appointed to smoke 'em out? You guessed it—the KING OF KOOKS himself—JERRY LEWIS! You'll laugh it up and live it up in the mirth-quaking mystery, "THE COCKEYED PRIVATE EYE," in the June issue, No. 106, on sale March 7!

She came from the black void of outer space on a grim mission of MURDER—to teach the world a lethal lesson—"HOW TO KILL A SEA-KING!" Yes, the target for the woman from another world is none other than AQUAMAN! Can the monarch of ATLANTIS deal with the deadly doll?. See the June issue, No. 39, on sale

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HIS RESCUE, THE *CAPED CRUSADER'S* 'COPTER SHOOTS OUT SUCTION CAPS THAT LATCH ONTO THE CROOKS' CRAFT...

ALL I HAVE TO DO NOW IS HAUL 'EM TO HEADQUARTERS...

WITH A GRATEFUL BOW TO MY MYSTERIOUS BENEFACTOR WHO SAVED MY LIFE... AGAIN...!

ZZZIP!

ZZZIP!

THROUGH A BREAK IN THE FOG HE GLIMPSES...

THERE ARE THE SMUGGLERS-- JUST AS I *THOUGHT* EXPECTED!

HIDING THEIR SMUGGLED GOODS INSIDE THAT *BUOY!*

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS LATER, AS FOG ROLLS ACROSS THE WATERS OF *GOTHAM CITY* HARBOR...

HERE I AM PATROLLING WHERE I HAD INTENDED GOING LAST NIGHT--

BUT THIS TIME I'M *BAT-BOATING* IT-- HUNTING FOR *SMUGGLERS!*

HUH? NOW WHAT MADE ME THINK *THAT?!*

HERE COMES *BATMAN*-- RIGHT ON SCHEDULE!

HAW! I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO SEE HIM GRAB THE STUFF INSIDE THE BUOY!

YEAH--IT'LL *KNOCK THE STUFFIN'* OUT OF *HIM!*

I HAVE A HUNCH I BETTER REMOVE THE LOOT FROM THE BUOY--HOLD IT AS *EVIDENCE!*

IT MIGHT NOT BE HERE *AFTER* I GRAB THOSE SMUGGLERS!

BUT BEFORE THE *BAT-BOAT* CAN GET WITHIN REACHING DISTANCE...

ANOTHER DEATH-TRAP!

AND *ANOTHER* SAVE FOR MY UNKNOWN BENEFACTOR!

A HAND TWISTS THE WHEEL! A FOOT SLAMS THE ACCELERATOR! THE *BAT-BOAT* DRIVES FORWARD LIKE A ROCKET...

THOSE SMUGGLERS ARE COUNTING ON GETTING AWAY IN THIS THICK FOG--

--BUT THE *BAT-BOAT'S* EQUIPPED WITH *RADAR* JUST AS THE *BATMOBILE* IS!

JUST BEYOND THE FOG THROUGH WHICH THE TWO SPEEDCRAFTS RACE LIKE DEMENTED WRAITHS...

JOHNNY WITTS IS STILL *ONE STEP AHEAD OF YOU, BATMAN!*

REMEMBER THAT--NEXT TIME WE CLASH ON OUR OWN--AND I OUT-WIT YOU!

AND WHEN THE PURSUIT NARROWS...

I HEAR THE *BAT-BOAT*.. BUT WHERE'S *BATMAN?* THAT BLASTED FOG IS--

I SEE HIM--SPRINGING LIKE A JACK-IN-THE-BOX OUT OF THE MISTS!

NOTHING CAN STAND AGAINST THE AWESOME ATTACK OF THE *MASKED MANHUNTER*-- NOT EVEN ON A SWAYING BOAT...

I'M GOING FLAT OUT-- FINISH THIS JOB IN A HURRY!

SEVERAL MINUTES LATER WHEN THE SMUGGLERS' CRAFT-- WITH THE *BAT-BOAT* IN TOW--EDGES INTO A WATERFRONT DOCK...

WE HAD A TIP THERE WAS A PHONY *BATMAN* WORKING A SMUGGLING RACKET--AND NOW WE'VE GOT HIM!

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!

YOU'RE MAKING A MISTAKE, OFFICERS-- I'M THE *REAL BATMAN*!

BUT HOW CAN I *PROVE* IT?

ONE FALSE MOVE, *BATMAN*--

AND OUR ORDERS ARE--*SHOOT TO KILL*!

I'LL COME ALONG QUIETLY, OFFICERS..

COMMISSIONER GORDON'LL HAVE TO GET ME OUT OF THIS!

YOU'RE RUNNING WRONG, BOYS-- COMMISSIONER GORDON WILL--

FORGET IT, *BATMAN*! NOW THAT THESE CUFFS ARE IN PLACE-- WE'VE GOT YOU WHERE WE WANT YOU!

NOW, MOVE-- ON A DEATH-MARCH-- *YOURS*!

CLICK!

AS THE CAPED CRUSADER IS HERDED INTO A WHARFSIDE WAREHOUSE...

I REALIZED TOO LATE THAT THESE WEREN'T *REAL* POLICEMEN! *GOTHAM* POLICE DON'T GET ORDERS TO SHOOT TO KILL ANYONE UNARMED! BESIDES, POLICE CARRY *REVOLVERS*-- NOT *AUTOMATICS* AS THESE COUNTERFEIT "COPS" ARE DOING!

WE WERE SENT TO *GOTHAM CITY* TO EXECUTE YOU, *BATMAN*!

AND WHAT BETTER WAY THAN--IN FRONT OF A *FIRING SQUAD*!

HANDCUFFED--FACING SEVEN EXPERT MARKSMEN--
BATMAN APPEARS FINALLY TO HAVE BEEN CAUGHT IN AN *INESCAPABLE DEATH-TRAP!*

YOU'LL NEVER ESCAPE FROM *THIS* BIND, *BATMAN!*

WE'RE ALL GOING TO SHOOT AT ONCE--SO *NOBODY* GETS CREDIT FOR HAVING KILLED CRIMEDOM'S GREATEST NEMESIS!

READY--
AIM--

FIRE!

BUT--WHEN THE GUNSMOKE CLEARS...

HE'S GONE!

DOWN THAT *TRAP-DOOR!*

HOW'D IT GET THERE?

ROCKING WITH DELIGHT IN A SMALL ROOM OF THE WAREHOUSE-BASEMENT, THE *GETAWAY GENIUS* CONGRATULATES HIMSELF ON A PERFECT PERFORMANCE...

I COULDN'T HAVE DONE BETTER IF I'D FLIMFLAMMED *MYSELF* OUT OF THAT FIRING SQUAD TRAP!

ALL I HAD TO DO WAS RIG A TRAP-DOOR WHERE THE EXECUTION WAS TO TAKE PLACE--AND TRIP IT AN INSTANT BEFORE THOSE EXECUTIONERS FIRED!

AH! THE WORLD'S *SECOND-BEST* ESCAPE ARTIST ISN'T HAVING ANY TROUBLE WRIGGLING OUT OF HIS "BRACELETS"!

HE'S ON HIS OWN NOW--AND IF I KNOW *BATMAN*, THAT GANG IS *IN* FOR IT!

SHEDDING HIS HANDCUFFS AS HE RACES UP THE WAREHOUSE STAIRS, THE *COWLED CRUSADER* THUNDERS FORWARD...

THEY'RE SO BUSY WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED-- THEY'LL NEVER HEAR ME TILL IT'S TOO LATE!

THREE OF THEM-- WITH THEIR BACKS TO ME--ARE PERFECTLY POSITIONED TO MEET THEIR *DOWNFALL* FIRST!

THAT LESSENS THE ODDS-- BY ABOUT 43 %!

A ROUNDHOUSE-PUNCH SWEEPS THROUGH THE AIR...

THAT DISPOSES OF ANOTHER DUO!

AND WHEN HE TURNS--IT IS TO FACE TWO DEADLY AUTOMATICS...

YOU FIGHT REAL GOOD, *BATMAN!*

BUT YOU CAN'T BRACE A COUPLE OF BULLETS!

I'M STILL AIMING FOR *TOTAL* VICTORY...!

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

EVEN AS TRIGGER-FINGERS TIGHTEN--THE PERFECT FIGHTING MACHINE THAT IS *BATMAN* IN ACTION SHOOTS FORWARD IN A LOW DIVE...

BLAMMM!

BLAMMM!

HANDS LIKE STEEL VISES FASTEN ON THE WAREHOUSE FLOOR--AS HIS MUSCULAR BODY ERUPTS LIKE A STEEL SPRING!...

THWAAPP!

IN THE *BATCAVE*, SOME HOURS LATER, AFTER THE SYNDICATE GANGSTERS HAVE BEEN IMPRISONED...

...AND SO, ALFRED, I FINALLY REALIZED IT HAD TO BE *MISTER ESPER** WHO USED HIS TRICK MEGAPHONE TO PROJECT *SUPER-SONIC* WHISPERS INTO THE SUBCONSCIOUS PART OF MY MIND--

SUGGESTING TO ME HOW AND WHERE TO GO ON MY NIGHT-PATROLS...

THOUGH I CAN'T IMAGINE *WHY* HE DID IT...OR WHO IT WAS THAT SAVED ME FROM THOSE DEATH-TRAPS!

*DETECTIVE COMICS #352: "BATMAN'S CRIME HUNT A GO-GO!"

TELL ME, ALFRED... WAS IT *YOU* WHO PLAYED GUARDIAN ANGEL--AS YOU DID ON ANOTHER OCCASION?

BEGGING YOUR PARDON, SIR--BUT I'VE BEEN IN THE HOUSE EVERY EVENING--PLAYING SCRABBLE WITH *AUNT HARRIETT!*

WELL, IF *YOU* DIDN'T SAVE ME--IT MUST HAVE BEEN *ROBIN!*

THE *BOY WONDER* ENTERS THE *BATCAVE* IN TIME TO CATCH *BATMAN'S* LAST WORDS...

I WISH I *COULD* CLAIM THE CREDIT--BUT I WAS MILES AWAY WITH THE *TEEN TITANS*--AND ONLY GOT BACK THIS MINUTE!

HMMMM! COULD IT HAVE BEEN A FELLOW MEMBER OF THE *JUSTICE LEAGUE*--WHO DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE HIS PRESENCE KNOWN FOR SOME REASON?

I WONDER IF I'LL EVER KNOW?

AND IN THE SECRET HIDEAWAY OF BATMAN'S GANGLAND GUARDIANS...

WORD'S JUST REACHED ME THAT THE SYNDICATE'S PLAN TO TAKE OVER GOTHAM CITY HAS BEEN CANCELED! THEY'RE AFRAID THEY'LL ALL WIND UP BEING CAPTURED BY BATMAN!

I'M ONE STEP AHEAD OF ALL OF YOU!

HA HA! THE JOKE'S ON THEM! NOW-- WHO GETS FIRST CRACK AT BATMAN?

LADIES FIRST!

KEEP IT UNDER YOUR HATS -- BUT I'VE SET MY CAP FOR THE CAPED CRUSADER!

WHILE THAT ARGUMENT RAGES HOTLY-- THE CRIMINAL KNOWN AS MISTER ESPER SMILES TO HIMSELF...

I WAS COMMISSIONED BY THE SYNDICATE TO LURE BATMAN INTO THOSE DEATH-TRAPS! BUT SINCE I'M EAGER TO TACKLE BATMAN AGAIN IN MY OWN E.S.P. FASHION-- I HAD TO PUT A STOP TO IT!

SO UNKNOWN TO THE SYNDICATE, I SUPER-WHISPERED INTO PENGUIN'S BRAIN ALL THE DETAILS OF THE DEATH-TRAPS-- KNOWING HE'D CALL ON GOTHAM'S TOP CROOKS TO HELP SAVE BATMAN FOR THEMSELVES!

NOW THE WAY'S BEEN CLEARED FOR ME TO TAKE ANOTHER CRACK AT BATMAN!

I CAN EXPECT STIFF COMPETITION FROM THOSE OTHER VILLAINS-- BUT I'M BOUND TO WIN!

THE END.

A

DC
MAY
NO. 175
WORLD'S FINEST
FEATURING: The SUPERMAN-BATMAN Revenge Squads!
DIE, MAN OF STEEL, DIE! OUR SUPERMAN REVENGE SQUAD WILL DESTROY YOU!
DIE, CAPED CRUSADER, DIE! OUR BATMAN REVENGE SQUAD WILL DESTROY YOU!

B

*WHICH MEANS... TAKE ONE FROM COLUMN A, AND ONE FROM COLUMN B, STARTING MAR. 12

LETTERS TO THE BATCAVE--EXTRA

Dear Editor:

Look! Rumbling down the road! Is it a motorized cardboard box? Is it a rocket-powered sardine can? NO! It's the *Batmobile*. Alright, you guys, you've given us the story we've been waiting for. "The Round-Robin Murder" story was a work of art. It was like it came right out of the *Golden Age of Comics*. So why not stick to the trend, get rid of the cross between an *Edsel* and *Avanti*, and bring back the *original Batmobile*?

Before the "new look" hit *Batman*, the *Batmobile* was . . . well, *the Batmobile*. As I remember, the *Batmobile* was built with speed in mind. It was used to send *Batman* and *Robin* barreling after crooks and it wasn't loaded down with a ton and a half of *Bat*-garbage. It was also designed with protection in mind. If I also remember correctly, the old *Batmobile* could stand up to hand grenades, bazooka shells, and mine fields and still keep the crusaders safe and sound.

Then in jumps the "new look" and with it a new model of the *Batmobile*. Gone now is the job of protection from the *Batmobile*, as the new model is a convertible. However, it was sleek, speedy, and just as good-looking as the old *Batmobile*. Also, it had very little *Bat*-junk on it. Repeat: *was* and *had*. This now-extinct, good-looking car is no more.

Suddenly, from out of nowhere, on the streets of *Gotham City* appears a third *Batmobile*. It looks like a cross between the first two *Batmobiles* and a 1910 tin lizzie. It offers no protection. It's as stream-lined as a turtle, it's loaded down with nets, ejector seats, computers, and other *Bat*-trash the *Dynamic Duo* doesn't need—and worst of all, it's ugly as sin.

Your recent stories have been superb. So why don't you take the new *Batmobile* and wrap it around a tree and bring back the original *Batmobile*? *I can't stand that new thing*!

—*Craig Merrick, South Bend, Ind.*

(Gil Kane introduced yet another "new" version of the *Batmobile* in the January, 1968 *Detective Comics*—which has been slightly modified in the forthcoming May *Detective*. But *can* there—*should* there—ever be a final, unchangeable model?—*Editor*)

• • • • • •

Dear Editor:

The "new look" is now so firmly entrenched we don't even call it that anymore. There's no doubt about it—*Batman* and *Robin* are different. Gone are the mad melange of characters: *Bat-Mite, Batwoman, Vicki Vale*, etc. I remember the wild controversy that followed the major shake-up. The only people who remained cool and indifferent were Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson—they kept on slugging the thugs, same as ever.

The death of *Alfred* was the most dramatic event in *Batman's history*. Sure, the clamor of the fans' indignation was great. So great, in fact, that you went so far as to revive everyone's favorite butler.

But by now you'd like to know what my point is. This: all the old characters were dropped, including *Alfred*, and even the style of *Batman* was changed. Then, the tide of demand became so overwhelming that *Alfred* was brought back. Well now, the fans do wield a lot of power, don't they? So I'd like to kick off what I hope will become the great *Bat*-movement.

I want to see the return of long narrow panels, where the huge black shadow of a bat is cast upon the wall by the appearance of a dark figure on a window ledge. I want to see two cloaked figures swing through the air on long ropes as they once used to do. I want to see people in the street look up in shock at the huge symbol of a bat, projected upon the clouds. I want to see really terrific mysteries, where *Batman* rushes to find someone and discovers his quarry dead or dying. Then his sharp eyes perceive a thread, a hair, or a sample of dirt left by the killer . . . and his keen mind is already working out the identity or location of the murderer.

How about it, *Batmaniacs*, are you with me?

—*Loren Lieberthal, New York, N.Y.*

(The current, April, *Detective* features "Hunt for a Robin-Killer," which contains many of the *Bat*-elements you plead for. Check it out and then check back with us.—*Editor*)

• • • • • •

Dear Editor:

After hurriedly reading through *Batman* 197, I came to the conclusion that it was *great*. Then I reread the story slowly—and came to the same conclusion. But I have formed a different opinion of *Batgirl*.

When she was first introduced I got the opinion that she would be a subsidiary character who would be used only when her presence was beneficial to the story. Now, it seems that in most of her encounters with *Batman*, *he* is the subsidiary.

In most of the five stories she's appeared in *Batgirl* is shown as strong and healthy, while *Batman* is temporarily helpless, sick, unconscious, or surpassed in thinking and detective ability by *Batgirl*.

In three of these stories I get the feeling that *Batgirl* is falling in the same rut as the now-departed *Batwoman*. There will be battles between the sexes, snooping out secret identities, and maybe later, a love interest.

Don't judge me as completely *anti-Batgirl* as I have been one of her staunchest supporters from the start, but please don't give a repetition of story-lines. Also, I suggest you limit *Batgirl* to four or five yearly appearances in *Detective*—and maybe one in *World's Finest*. But leave *Batman Comics* strictly to *Batman* and *Robin*.

—*Gene Wallace, Flint, Mich.*

(Until *Batgirl's* sales ratings come in, we can make no decision on the frequency of her appearances.—*Editor*)

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Address communications to LETTERS TO THE BATCAVE—EXTRA, National Periodical Publications, 575 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

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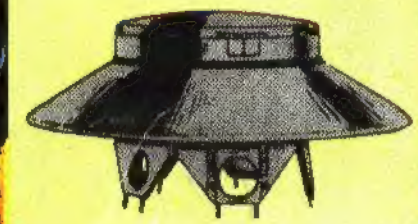

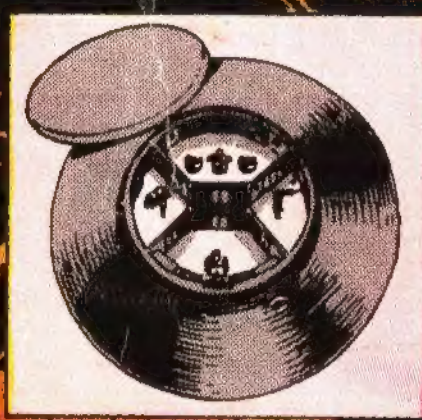

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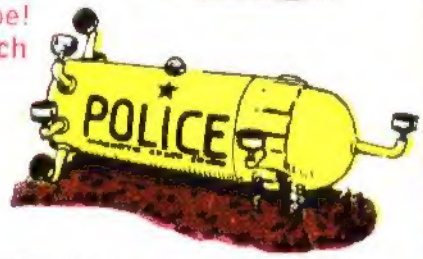

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